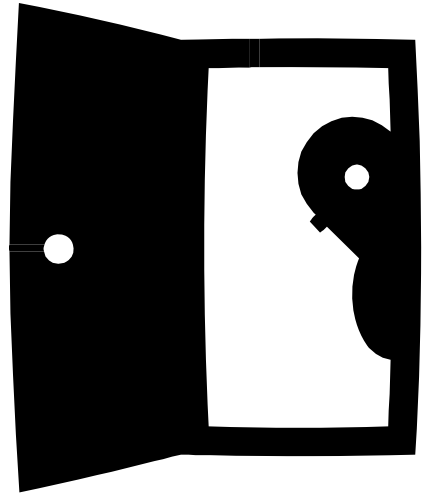


President's Open Door program welcomes array of issues, ideas

*By Tech. Sgt. André Nicholson
University Affairs*

It's been up and running for more than a month and users of the new on-line reporting system have been able to voice their concerns and suggestions regarding university functions.



The President's Open Door program, which started Jan. 4, allows non-faculty staff members at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) to share their concerns, good, bad or indifferent, with Dr. Charles L. Rice, the university president.

Prior to the system being installed, the president's office received information from individuals throughout the university directly, or sometimes by anonymous sources. The individuals who chose to remain anonymous however, made the process of gathering more information or taking corrective actions limited.

"I intend for this program to compensate for those limits by providing members of the USU staff with an efficient, effective, and "safe" environment to electronically bring me information they believe I should have in order to properly evaluate and improve operations of the university," Dr. Rice said. "While other members of the USU

community are welcome to use this channel, I have instituted it with the non-faculty staff foremost in my mind.”

The benefit of the new system is that it still allows people to remain anonymous, but offers the ability to communicate with the individual through a secured network.

Since the program started, there have been more than a dozen reports on various topics ranging from the cafeteria menu, to the parking garage construction, to the alternate work schedule.

One reporter (the person submitting something to the system) suggested that the cafeteria menu be sent out via e-mail on a weekly basis in addition to the daily menu and that suggestion is currently being implemented by the cafeteria manager.

Another reporter sent in a concern about alternate work schedules. Some employees are authorized to work an alternative work schedule (AWS) with their supervisor’s approval. Concerns have been raised that some individuals on AWS may be abusing the system, which creates a problem for recording accurate time and attendance. Due to this concern, an audit of alternate work schedules is planned for all who participate in AWS.

Although the system was designed for people to voice their concerns and receive immediate feedback, it is wise to attempt to work the issue through the proper channels already established in the university first.

“We encourage people to use this system, after all that’s what it was designed for,” said Susan Bruff, director, Office of Review and Evaluation. “However, we do want to reinforce that people should continue to use their chain of command to resolve issues at that level first.”

Although several issues were resolved with a one-time response, others have raised concerns that require more in-depth follow-up and some action, according to Ms. Bruff.

“We’ve provided some informative responses to reporters,” she said, “but now it’s time to transfer to the next stage of this program – action.”

Ms. Bruff plans to share the anonymous concerns with university senior management to make them aware of the program’s success and to inform them of the issues being brought forward.

For more information, or to file a report users can visit the USU homepage at

<http://www.usuhs.mil> and click on the Open Door Program link on the left.